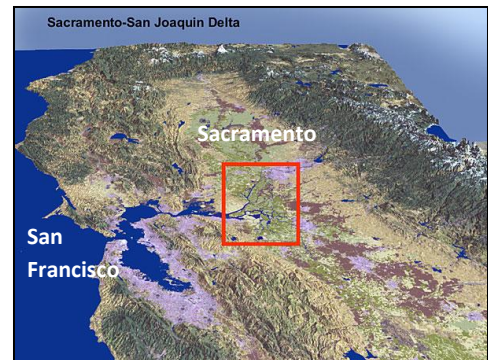




Delta Stewardship Council

Formed by the confluence of the state's two longest rivers—the Sacramento and the San Joaquin—California's Delta is one of the most valuable and unique natural resources in the state and nation. Nearly two-thirds of the state's population relies on the Delta watershed for all or part of its drinking water. Much of California's irrigated agriculture is dependent on water from the Delta watershed and so, too, is the state's iconic salmon fishery.

The Delta is home to more than half a million residents. The many islands and waterways form important habitat for hundreds of plant and animal species. Additionally, tourism and recreation opportunities draw visitors to the estuary from the state and around the world. The Delta also contains major infrastructure of statewide importance, including aqueducts, natural gas pipelines, electricity transmission lines, railroads, shipping channels, and highways.



Despite the Delta's importance, the challenges of effectively addressing both water supply and ecosystem needs have led to increased conflicts over time. The natural resources of the Delta have not been effectively protected, nor are reliable supplies of water being provided for California. The challenges in meeting these often competing uses are compounded by new scientific information suggesting increased risks from climate change and the potential for increased flooding along Delta tributaries.

Creating the Council

In November 2009 the California Legislature enacted SBX7 1 (Delta Reform Act), one of several bills passed at this time related to water supply reliability, ecosystem health, and the Delta. The Act became effective on Feb. 3, 2010. In the Act, the Legislature advanced several broad goals, including the *coequal goals*, a concept central to understanding the Delta Reform Act and the state's Delta policy:

- Achieve the two coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place.
- Protect, maintain, and, where possible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the Delta environment, including, but not limited to, agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreational activities.
- Ensure orderly, balanced conservation and development of Delta land resources.
- Improve flood protection by structural and nonstructural means to ensure an increased level of public health and safety.



Specifically, the bill created the Delta Stewardship Council, consisting of seven members with diverse expertise providing a broad statewide perspective and set for them several tasks, including:

- Develop a sustainable management plan for the Delta (Delta Plan);
- Develop performance measures for the assessment and tracking of progress and changes to the health of the Delta ecosystem, fisheries, and water supply reliability;
- Determine, on appeal, if a state or local agency's project in the Delta ("covered action") is consistent with the Delta Plan; and
- Determine, on appeal, whether the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) meets statutory criteria in the Delta Reform Act for inclusion in the Delta Plan.

The Delta Plan

As a legally enforceable construct, the Delta Plan will be used to guide state and local actions in the Delta in a manner that furthers the coequal goals. It will also guide protection and enhancement of the unique resources, culture, and values of the Delta as an evolving place. As required by statute, the Council must adopt and implement this comprehensive management plan by Jan. 1, 2012. The timeline and activities for developing the Delta Plan and the associated Environmental Impact Report are:

- Publish Notice of Preparation December 2010
- Scoping Meetings January 2011
- Public Draft EIR and Draft Delta Plan June 2011
- Public Review of Draft EIR and Draft Delta Plan June 2011 – August 2011
- Draft Final EIR and Delta Plan..... November 2011
- Final EIR and Delta Plan..... December 2011

Delta Independent Science Board

The Delta ISB, also created by the Delta Reform Act and appointed by the Council, is a standing board of nationally and internationally prominent scientists with appropriate expertise to evaluate the broad range of scientific programs that support adaptive management of the Delta. The Delta ISB will provide oversight of the scientific research, monitoring, and assessment programs that support adaptive management of the Delta through periodic reviews of each of those programs. The overall objective of Delta ISB oversight is to help make the science underlying Bay-Delta programs, the application of that science, and the technical aspects of those programs, the best available.

Public Participation and Interaction with Other Governmental Agencies

The Council is committed to maintaining openness in its decision-making processes, and will reach out to all interested Californians as the Delta Plan is developed. Public input is welcome on an ongoing basis, either at the Council's monthly meetings, through its scheduled workshops, or via its website. In developing the Delta Plan, the Council will also consult with federal, state, and local agencies with responsibilities in the Delta, as required by statute.